



New Volunteer Orientation



Thank you for considering serving those who served. Our namesake, Ralph H. Johnson, bravely gave his life for our country and we consider it a privilege to serve the brave men and women like him who served our country.

While our primary function is to deliver the best care anywhere, our customers are our America's Heroes, which makes volunteering here a little different from most hospitals. If you enjoy working in a health care environment and showing appreciation for those who bought your freedom through sacrifice, we know you will enjoy serving where the price of freedom is visible every day.

Expectations

- Our program requires a SIX MONTH, 4 hours per week minimum commitment. If you cannot make this commitment, please STOP now and call or email us to talk about short-term needs.
- Talk to us if:
 - Your personal/work schedule changes and you need to change your assignment schedule
 - You aren't enjoying your assignment – we are happy to try to find something different (about 1 in 7 volunteers change assignments, so you won't be alone)
- Follow the rules! Note that most of what you'll find here are health care rules, not government rules, and are designed for patient safety.

Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center Voluntary Service

- Fred Lesinski – Chief, Voluntary Service
 - Laurie Ferguson – Voluntary Service Specialist (local volunteers) – 789-6059
 - Vicki Johnson – Voluntary Service Specialist (clinic volunteers, donor relations) – 789-7440
 - Christopher Jackson – Program Assistant – 577-5011 x5796
-
- Office Phone: (843) 789-7230
 - Staff Email: VHAChaVAVS@va.gov
 - <http://www.charleston.va.gov/giving/>

What is VA Voluntary Service?

- At a minimum, Voluntary Service is responsible for recruiting, orienting and placing volunteers within VA. Voluntary Service handles volunteer human resource issues, makes sure volunteer hours are logged into a timekeeping system, and holds award ceremonies. Group visits to inpatients are also coordinated by Voluntary Service
- Voluntary Service is also responsible for accepting and recording donations. Voluntary Service is the only service that can accept donations for VA.

VA Voluntary Service (VAVS)

- Founded 1946 to provide for nation's Veterans while they are cared for by VA health care facilities
- One of the largest centralized Volunteer programs in the Federal Government
- Over 350 organizations support VAVS
- Volunteers have provided over 700 million hours of service since 1946



Laura Balun –
Director, Voluntary
Service Office

VA in the News

The Washington Monthly

"The Best Care Anywhere"

Fortune

"How the VA Healed Itself"

TIME

FROM THE MAGAZINE

Sunday, Aug. 27, 2006

How VA Hospitals Became The Best

No longer a nation's shame, veteran care is acing competitors

By DOUGLAS WALLER

Most private hospitals can only dream of the futuristic medicine Dr. Divya Shroff practices today. Outside an elderly patient's room, the attending physician gathers her residents around a wireless laptop propped on a mobile cart. Shroff accesses the patient's entire medical history--a stack of paper in most private hospitals. And instead of trekking to the radiology lab to view the latest X-ray, she brings it up on her computer screen. While Shroff is visiting the patient, a resident types in a request for pain medication, then punches the SEND button. Seconds later, the printer in the hospital pharmacy spits out the order. The druggist stuffs a plastic bag of pills into what looks like a tiny space capsule, then shoots it up to the ward in a vacuum tube. By the time Shroff wheels away her computer, a nurse walks up with the drugs.

Life in a big-name institution like the Mayo Clinic? Not hardly. Shroff, 31, a specialist in internal medicine, works at the Veterans Affairs hospital in Washington, where the vets who come for the cutting-edge treatment are mostly poor.



BusinessWeek

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/06_29/b3993061.htm

JULY 17, 2006
HEALTH

The Best Medical Care In The U.S.

How Veterans Affairs transformed itself -- and what it means for the rest of us

ership in "the greatest generation." A flight down over Potsdam during a bombing run. He him in enemy territory. Roemer spent 11 months by General George S. Patton's troops in April,

purple Heart and a few crushed vertebrae from sweetheart, started a successful metal-benefits with Blue Cross/Blue Shield. He can afford hospitals in the area, but Roemer has made what Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Buffalo, a esn't go just for his service-related injuries, either. prescriptions there, and he uses the hospital for ed his 59-year-old son and business partner, VA.

Buffalo VA's unprepossessing entrance, into a world, understaffed, underfunded, and uncaring. nation's hospital-accreditation panel, the VA on. "The care here is excellent," says Roemer. "I group I belong to all feel the same."



The NEW ENGLAND
JOURNAL of MEDICINE

HOME | SUBSCRIBE | SEARCH | CURRENT ISSUE | PAST ISSUES | COLLECTIONS | HELP

PERSPECTIVE

Volume 352:219-222 January 20, 2005 Number 3

Next ▶

Beyond the Purple Heart — Continuity of Care for the Wounded in Iraq

James B. Peake, M.D.

the familiar beeps of monitors in the ing the usual collection of skills and beyond the generic hospital buzz, the of incoming mortars and the loud whine of often directly from the point of wounding, surgical teams in Iraq from the ERs and seen here and the frequency of major s who have sustained devastating injuries us far, during the war in Iraq, the Army has in combat.



U.S. News & World Report

"Military Might – Today's VA Hospitals Are Models of Top-Notch Care"

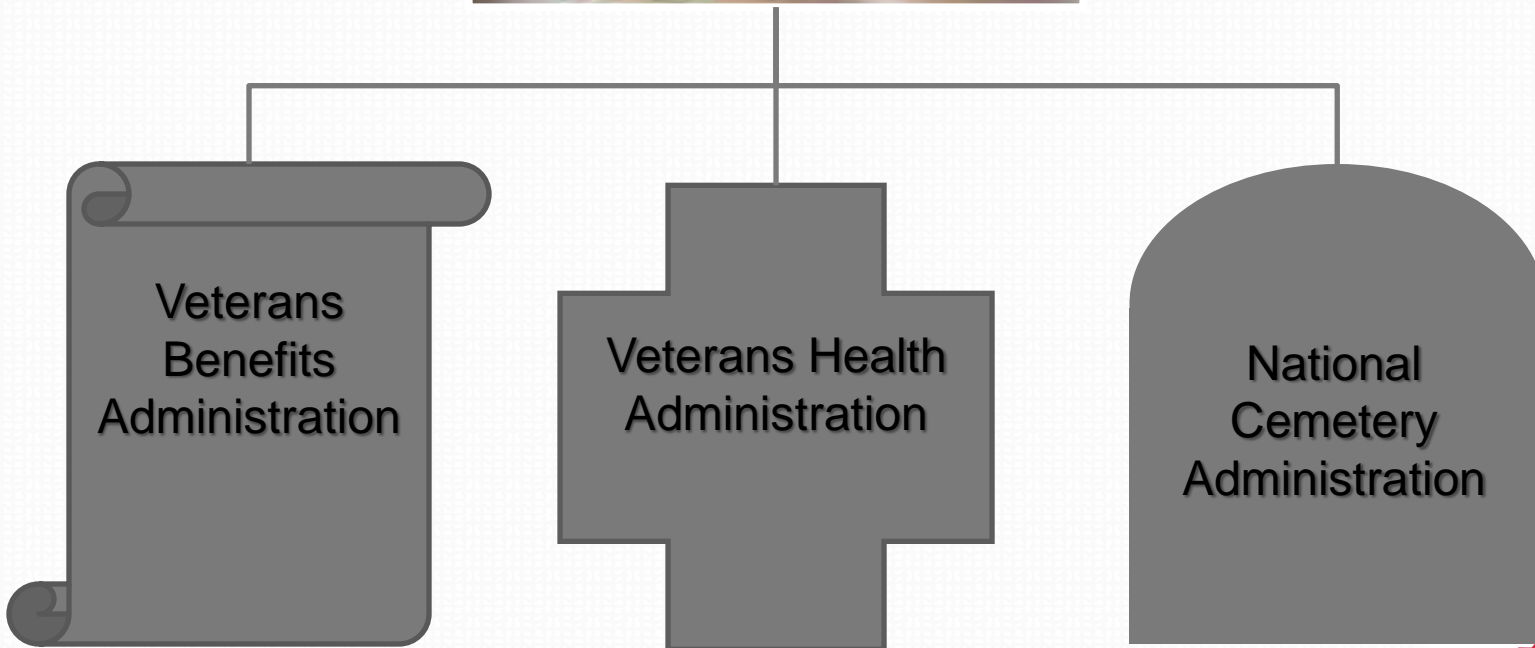
[7]



"The Price of Freedom is Seen Here"



VA Structure



VISN 7 Access Points



“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”

Without Compensation (WOC) Appointee

- Volunteers accepted in the VAVS Program are considered WOC appointees. WOC precludes monetary payment, or any form of compensation by VA not authorized by policy



[10]

Benefits of VA Volunteering

- Meal provided when volunteering four or more hours a day
- Tax free shopping at Canteen Service
- Personal satisfaction from serving those who served
- Free on-site training opportunities
- Improved health
- Free flu shots, screenings, and other benefits as announced
- Recognition and award opportunities
- Free use of the medical library

Youth Volunteers

- Parental/guardian consent required under age 18
- No minimum age, but all under age 13 must be accompanied by a guardian while volunteering and cannot register as an RS volunteer
- Between 13 and 18 – supervision based on maturity
- Youth volunteers should not be left in a patient's room with the door closed
- Youth volunteers cannot work in same area as parent or guardian

Volunteer Assignments

- We classify our assignments in five broad categories:
 - Drivers
 - Clerical
 - Customer service/Wheelchair escort
 - Supplemental clinical
 - Interactive/recreation
- Factors like age, background check results, and driving record may be disqualifiers for some assignments
- We work hard to find assignments that fit your interests and our needs – happy volunteers keep volunteering!

Tracking Hours

- Volunteers must sign in to Voluntary Service computer workstations to report their volunteer hours
- Locations without sign-in computers use sign in sheets
- If you cannot find any other way to sign in, please leave a message on our voicemail or email us
- Sign-in computers are located at:
 - Charleston – 1st floor, Voluntary Service office
 - Savannah Clinic
 - Myrtle Beach Clinic
 - Coming soon – Community Living Center and other clinics – please use manual sign-in sheet until install

Timekeeping Reminders

- There is only a sign-in, not a sign out
- Estimate your service, rounding up your hours to the next whole hour
- If your estimate differs from actual, please do your best to make it up next time
- ALWAYS sign in/call in for liability and emergency locator purposes!
- If the computer is down, or you can't make it to one, use a sign-in sheet

Parking

- At Charleston, we have few volunteer parking spots but if you'd like a permit, we issue them in Voluntary Service office
- Clinics have general parking – no permit needed
- Permit required only if using volunteer parking
- Requires license, registration, insurance card

Meals

- Meals are available in:
 - Charleston – Canteen on first floor
 - Clinics – Meal vouchers for local restaurants (Savannah only at this time)
- *You must present meal ticket to receive meal, which is good for up to \$6.00 at the Canteen or local restaurant – no change will be given, can only be for food, and you must pay any overage. The Meal Ticket is only valid on the day you volunteer*

****Except for drivers, there is a 30-day/20-hour minimum service to be eligible for meals. After you reach this milestone, ask us to turn on your meal ticket options****

List of Excluded Individuals or Entities (LEIE)

- List of Excluded Individuals and Entities – cannot do business, even volunteer work, for the US government
- Reasons for placement on this list include:
 - Convictions for program-related fraud (i.e. Medicare, Medicaid)
 - Patient abuse
 - Licensing board actions
 - Default on Health Education Assistance Loans
- All volunteers must be cleared through the LEIE system
- Placement on the LEIE list makes an individual ineligible to volunteer unless a waiver can be obtained
- A waiver cannot be obtained

Categories of Background Investigations

- SAC – Special Agreement Check reviews all national, state, and local police and court records
- NACI – National Agency Check and Inquiries investigation includes SAC, and investigators also interview acquaintances, coworkers, and other individuals
- HIPDB – Healthcare Practitioners Information Database reviews national and state clinical licensure issues (for practitioner volunteers only)

A Special Agreement Check (SAC) is conducted on ALL volunteers at Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center

- Results are reviewed case by case. In most cases, minor offenses will not be considered. More serious offenses may limit volunteer activity. For example, a recent drug charge may prevent a volunteer from serving in the pharmacy. Identity theft and recent violent offenses may result in non-appointment.

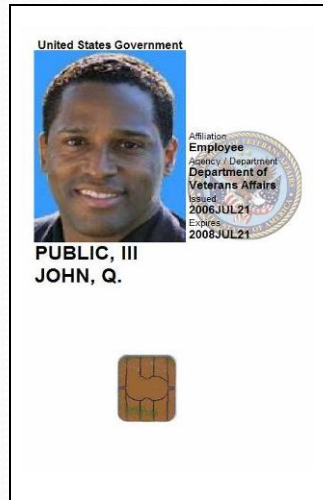
Important Notes About Background Checks

- NACI background checks are required on volunteers who require computer access, as well as other training
- Volunteers under age 18 cannot be fingerprinted
- Volunteers who turn 18 while volunteering will be required to complete a SAC

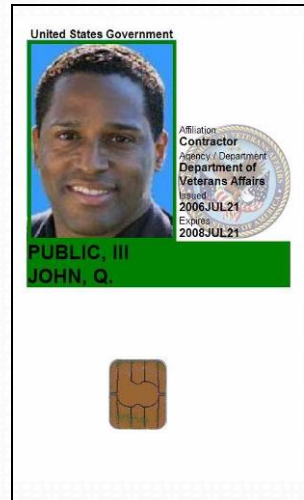
Volunteer ID Cards

- Approved volunteers have ID cards issued by the PIV office, our local issuing authority
- Badges are issued after background check clearance – sorry for inconvenience as you may have to return to the medical center to get your badge
- Volunteer IDs must be worn at all times while volunteering at any VA facility
- ID badges are the property of the United States. You must turn your card into Voluntary Service if you stop volunteering, or upon request.

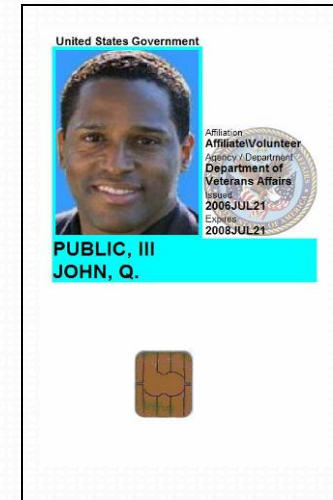
Examples of ID Cards



Employee



Contractor



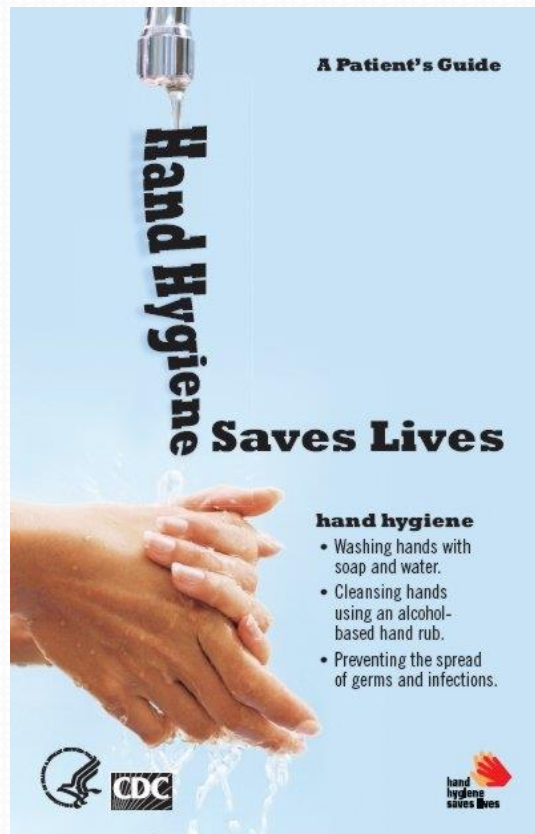
Affiliate/Volunteer

Infection Control

- Infection control practices include:
 - Sneezing or coughing into a tissue or upper sleeve, rather than into your hands; discard tissue into wastebasket and then clean your hands
 - Avoiding patient contact when you have a respiratory infection or cold
 - Staying home when you have symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, fever, skin rash, or the flu
 - Keeping appropriate vaccinations current (influenza, tetanus, etc.)

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs and infections



Hand Washing Technique – Takes 20 seconds and includes the following steps:

1. Wet hands
2. Apply soap
3. Work up lather for 15 seconds
4. Rinse hands
5. Dry hands with paper towel
6. Turn off water faucet with paper towel

(25)

Hand Hygiene

- You must wash your hands:
 - Before and after work shifts
 - Before and after each contact with a patient or objects used by the patient (i.e. pushing wheelchairs or stretchers)
 - Before eating, drinking, or handling food
 - After restroom use, smoking, eating, grooming, touching face, hair, money, etc.
 - Anytime your hands are dirty or may be contaminated

Hand Hygiene



- Alcohol sanitizers are effective and may be used instead of soap and water unless your hands are dirty or contaminated.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are located outside of each inpatient ward and room.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- PPE includes:
 - Disposable Gowns
 - Caps
 - Masks
 - Gloves
 - Face shields/eye shields
 - Shoe covers
- Volunteers should only wear PPE as directed by supervisor and medical staff
- **Do not** walk through the facility wearing PPE. Dispose of used equipment before leaving patient room



Isolation Precaution

- Isolation precaution prevents the spread of infection among patients, hospital personnel, volunteers, and visitors
- If a patient's room is marked with a stop sign, comply with instructions for required personal protective equipment before entering. Ask ward nursing staff for assistance if you have any questions



Confidentiality & Privacy

- What is Patient Confidentiality?
 - The obligation of others to keep an individual's personal information secret, disclosing it only within the bounds of professional and legal standards
- What is Patient Privacy?
 - Freedom from unjustified intrusion into one's personal life

What's the difference? Looking into records without a “need to know” is a privacy violation. Sharing protected information, whether or not you have a need to know it, is a confidentiality violation.

*VA takes patient privacy and confidentiality seriously
– you should too!*

What Are Your Responsibilities?

- “Volunteers, as WOC employees, are subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a and 38 U.S.C. Sections 5701 and 7332) and all VA regulations implementing that statute. Accordingly, volunteers must assist VA staff in safeguarding the privacy of patient information accessed during the course of their duties at the VA facility. Volunteers are not exempt from prosecution or fine in the case of an unlawful release of patient information” – VHA Handbook Section 7a
- Unauthorized request for, or release of confidential patient information is considered a misdemeanor, and subject to up to **\$5,000** fine

What Are Your Responsibilities?

- As a VA Volunteer you are required to protect information from release and to ensure the confidentiality, integrity, and security of health information
- If you accidentally obtain confidential information, do not release – return to sender!
- If you have a volunteer **assignment requiring computer access**, you are agreeing and accepting the responsibility of protecting VA information when you sign the Rules of Behavior – please take seriously!
- If you see a security breach (unauthorized use, suspect fraud, or see/find PHI) report it immediately

Volunteers Needing Computer Access

- In addition to a more thorough NACI background check, volunteers with assignments requiring computer access:
 - Allow 2-4 weeks on assignment prior to request
 - Must have a staff sponsor in his/her work area to request access
- VAVS will initiate NACI after staff requests access
- Volunteer must initially and annually read and sign the Rules of Behavior for VA information systems – see VAVS

Cameras, Video Equipment, etc.

- Patient privacy includes the right to not be photographed without consent. Voluntary Service and Public Relations have forms to be filled out by a Veteran giving their permission to be photographed. These forms include information on who is taking the picture and where it will be used. Photographs containing Veterans are not to be taken unless these forms are signed
- Please respect our Veteran's privacy by refraining from taking pictures of them

Patient Abuse

- Patient abuse or neglect is any action or failure to act which causes unreasonable suffering or harm to the patient
- It is the policy of the VA that no patient is to be mistreated or abused in any way: physically, psychologically, sexually or verbally by any employee, volunteer, student or visitor
- Volunteers who witness any kind of abuse toward a patient must promptly report it to their immediate supervisor or the VAVS staff and be prepared to write a statement

Politics, Religion & Money

- Because VA facilities are voter registration stations, no material (including clothing) can be brought into the facility by VA staff (including volunteers) promoting a party or candidate
- Only VA Chaplains can provide spiritual guidance. Volunteers can assist Chaplain Service under supervision
- Volunteers cannot engage in ANY financial transaction with a Veteran patient – sales, loans, gifts, check cashing are prohibited
- Only VA Voluntary Service can accept donations
- If you see a compliance issue, inform Voluntary Service or our Compliance Officer
- Professional boundaries must be maintained between staff (including volunteers) and patients

What is Sexual Harassment?

- Sexually-oriented verbal kidding, teasing, or jokes
- Repeated sexual flirtations, advances or propositions
- Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Graphic or degrading comments about an individual or the individual's appearance
- Display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures
- Subtle pressure for sexual activity
- Physical contact such as patting, hugging, pinching, or brushing against another's body

What To Do If You Experience Sexual Harassment

- Tell the person the behavior is unwanted, unwelcomed, or unsolicited, and to stop
- Keep a record
- Ask co-workers if they observed the behavior
- Contact supervisor or Voluntary Service staff immediately



Facility Safety

- Weapons of any kind are prohibited on VA property
- Wear appropriate clothing and shoes for your assignment
- If machinery is used during an assignment, follow safety rules
- This is a non-smoking facility - smoking is restricted to outdoors in designated areas
- For safety reasons, food prepared in a private home may not be given to patients
- Only foods prepared by a commercial licensed/inspected food establishment may be received and served to groups
- Be cautious about giving personal information to patients
- Report all injuries to your supervisor, no matter how small

Threats

- Potential signs of threats
 - No ID badge
 - Visible signs of nervousness (like excessive sweating)
 - Inappropriate clothing that is excessively baggy or too heavy in warm weather
 - Contact VAPD to report
- If you feel threatened
 - Avoid confrontation
 - Walk away
 - Report immediately to Police Service
 - If you can't get away from the aggressor, scream for help

Suspicious Bags or Boxes

- Ask yourself:
 - Is the bag or box unattended?
 - Do you see an unknown substance?
 - Do you smell a strange odor?
- If you answered “yes” to any of the above, then:
 - Do not touch the bag
 - Call Police Services
 - Keep your eyes on the bag until the Police arrive to ensure no one takes it by mistake

Remember: When in Doubt, Call Police Service

From any VA phone:

Emergency – 7911

Non-emergency – 7251

From a non-VA phone/your cell phone – call 911

Hazardous Material



- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) developed the Hazard Communication Standard (also known as the Right-To-Know standard) to protect workers from chemical hazards. As a volunteer, you won't be required to handle any hazardous materials. If an instance occurs where you feel you must, ask your supervisor for instructions
- **Do not** handle needles, syringes, or other sharps. Request Nursing, Medical, or other technical personnel to dispose of such equipment
- **Do not** attempt to clean up any spills, vomitus, or expectorations. Contact Environmental Management Service to decontaminate the area

Emergency Preparedness



“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”

Fire Equipment

- Fire alarm systems in hallways
- Sprinkler systems in all buildings
- Fire extinguishers throughout facility



- Caution – When an announcement is made that the fire alar is being tested, wall fire alarms (pull stations) and strobes won't work. Call 7911!

Responding to a Fire

RACE

- **Rescue**
 - Get patients and those unable to escape fire clear of danger
- **Alarm**
 - Pull fire alarm or call 7911
- **Confine**
 - Close doors to inhibit spread of fire
- **Extinguish or Evacuate**
 - In the case of small, isolated fires, extinguish IF you are able. In case of large fires, evacuate yourself and those unable to evacuate themselves

Fire Extinguishers

- Do not attempt to put out a fire unless you have been trained on how to use a fire extinguisher
- When using a fire extinguishers:

PASS

- Pull the pin
- Aim nozzle at the base of the flames
- Squeeze the handle
- Sweep the extinguisher back and forth across the fire until the fire is extinguished

Backup Power

- **Disruption of Utility Systems:** Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center is on backup generators. **DO NOT use the elevators** during periods of sporadic power outages, in the event of a fire, or any other occurrence which may cause you to be trapped in the elevator

Customer Service

- When assisting Veteran patients, communication is key
- Always ask the Veteran if they need or want assistance before lending assistance
- Do not attempt to assist the Veteran once they have indicated they do not want or need assistance

Dress Code



“The Price of Freedom is Seen Here”

Dress Code

- Clothing with offensive or potentially inflammatory messages are not permitted
- Open-toed shoes are not appropriate in patient care areas or where risk of injury to exposed feet is possible
- Personal expression is fine, but lack of coverage that may present a health hazard or hair that cannot be adequately covered is not

Next Steps...

- Print the New Volunteer Completion Certificate and Assessment (click [HERE](http://www.charleston.va.gov/CHARLESTON/services/volunteer/NVOTestwithCertificate.pdf) to access or copy and paste <http://www.charleston.va.gov/CHARLESTON/services/volunteer/NVOTestwithCertificate.pdf> into search bar)
- Complete the assessment and sign the certification
- Sign and complete the Volunteer Application
- Email completed forms to vhachavavs@va.gov, fax to (843) 789-6132, bring with you in person or mail to Ralph H. Johnson VAMC, Voluntary Service, 109 Bee St., Charleston SC 29401

****If you are a volunteer driver or a volunteer phlebotomist please contact the Voluntary Services Office at (843) 789-7230 for information on additional documentation required****

Thank You!

- On behalf of the 56,000 Veterans served annually by the Ralph H. Johnson VAMC, we thank you for your interest in serving those who served. Without volunteers like you, we would be unable to provide the exceptional level of care our Veterans deserve.

